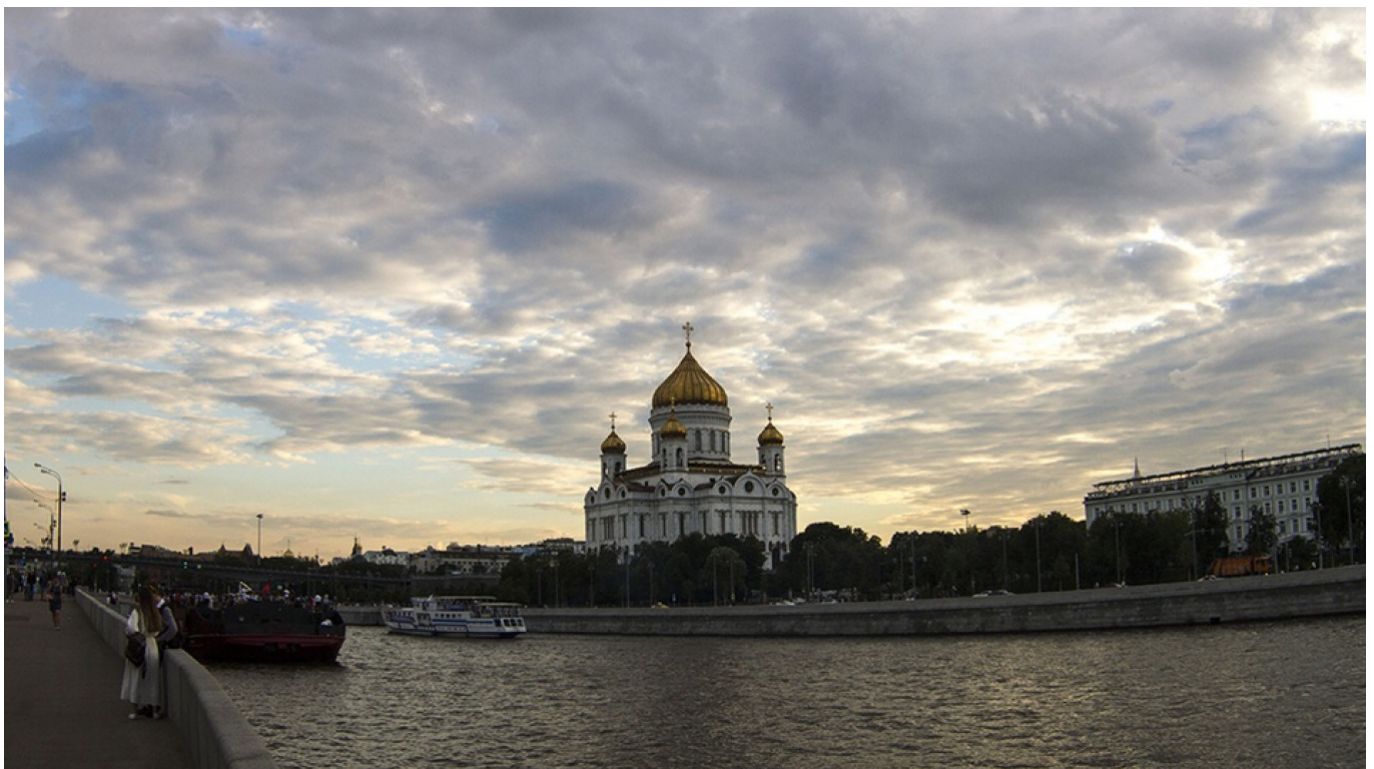


Let a Guru Guide You Around Moscow

Guru Walking Tours offers free excursions in Moscow

By [Eloise Melville](#)

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Sometimes you might strike it lucky with a great photo op on your walking tour. **Yuri Nestsiarovich / MT**

“I hope people on my tours get the impression of Moscow as a living city, not only a collection of buildings steeped in history.”

That is how Roman Zhavnis, a tour guide who works with Guru Walking Tours, described his excursion around Moscow. Guru Walking Tours is a worldwide community of local guides who offer free walking tours in their home cities.

The group met by Kropotkinskaya Metro, where Roman told us a bit about himself and the tour. The Guru walking tour had drawn about a dozen people, half native Russian speakers and half English speakers. There were two men from Belarus who had been working in Moscow for the last five years, a student who had recently arrived to Moscow from Siberia and a Muscovite who saw the tour as an opportunity to practice his English. The English speakers were U.S. Embassy staff members and two students.

Roma organized the tour to meander along the river embankment and then cross the river to end near the Tretyakov Gallery. He described the history of the White City wall which used to encircle Moscow and also about its popularity now as a boulevard for summer strolls — and a key feature in Muscovites' Instagram feed.

Roma organizes his excursions by picking a neighborhood and then selecting the most impressive locations along the route and compiling small stories about the buildings or monuments. But he usually mixes in the unexpected. Our tour was no different. As we wended our way down towards Bolotnaya Ploshchad, we were lucky enough to catch a Friday night juggling club, as well as a group of local teenagers dressed in camouflage and practicing their knife fighting with not entirely innocuous-looking plastics knives.

Overall, it was an informative tour. Although Roma's English wasn't fluent, the group understood everything, and he could understand and answer questions. At the end of the tour we took a group photo, were offered a certificate of participation and in turn offered a tip to Roma for the evening.

Apart from the optional tip, this is a free tour. For a much higher price, you could take a tour around Moscow with a guide who may speak more quickly and pack in an extensive history of the city. However, for those who are looking for a relaxed atmosphere, a less touristy crowd and a tour around the less well-visited parts of town — this is for you.

For more information about upcoming tours and to sign up, see [Guru Walking Tours](#).

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